



ATSDR
AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES
AND DISEASE REGISTRY



**LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**
Public Health

Motor oil spilled in the flood water by Lard Oil Company may have been found on your property

Purpose of this document

This fact sheet will help you understand how to deal with the oil spill from the Lard Oil Company, an oil distribution company located in Denham Springs (Livingston Parish) that handles gasoline and other fuel oils, as well as containerized lube oils. It will also explain other issues to consider before returning to your home.

Background

Floodwaters in the Denham Springs area were 4-6 ft deep and, as a result, displaced oil containers at the Lard Oil Company as well as other businesses in the area. Inventory indicates approximately 700-1000 gallons of new motor oil were washed away in the floodwater impacting properties in the surrounding neighborhood. A majority of the impact involved a sheen or staining on fences, bushes and several buildings in surrounding areas. In addition, several pockets of emulsified oil accumulated in the corners of fenced areas. In response, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has required Lard Oil Company develop plans to clean up the affected spill areas. In addition, the EPA and Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) will review sample results to confirm/verify that the affected areas are protective of public health.

What was spilled?

The chemicals which were spilled in the flood water were motor oil, also called engine oil, the type of oil which you pour into your car engine every 3,000 – 5,000 miles. These oils are extracted from crude oil and are not very volatile. Motor oil cannot easily be converted into vapors; therefore, it cannot be readily inhaled. In addition, sunlight and other natural processes decrease the amount of chemical in motor oil over time. As a result, levels of chemicals are likely to be lower now than when they were first released on your property; and, the potential for chemical exposure from dermal contact with the oil is minimal. These oils contain Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPHs).

What happens to TPH when it enters the environment?

Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon is released to the environment through accidents, as releases from industries, or as byproducts from commercial or private uses. When TPH is released directly to water through spills or leaks, certain TPH fractions will float in the water and form thin surface films. Other heavier fractions will accumulate in the sediment at the bottom of the water, which may affect bottom –feeding fish and organisms. TPH released to the soil may move through the soil to the groundwater. Individual compounds may then separate from the original mixture, depending upon the chemical properties of the compound. Some of the compounds will evaporate into the air and others will dissolve into the groundwater and move away from the release area.

How Might I be exposed to TPH?

Everyone is exposed to TPH from many sources such as breathing gasoline fumes at pumping stations, spilled crankcase oil on pavement, using chemicals at home or work, or by exposure to certain pesticides which contain TPH components as solvents. A small amount of lighter TPH components are found in the general air you breathe.

Is there a medical test to show whether I've been exposed to TPH?

There is no medical test that shows if you have been exposed to TPH.

Other safety issues

Besides potential motor oil contamination, you should check several other safety issues before you return to your home:

- Your home may not be structurally sound.
- Your property may have a lot of mold.
- Various wildlife such as snakes may have entered and now live in your home.

To protect your health and safety, we recommend you take these steps before you reoccupy your home:

- Do not enter a building if you smell gas. Do not light a match or turn on lights. Leave the building immediately and call the Livingston Parish Sheriff's Department at 225-686-2241.
- Turn off the electrical power at the main source if there is standing water. Never turn on power or use an electric tool or appliance while standing in water.

- Wash your hands often with soap and clean water, or use a hand-cleaning gel with alcohol in it.
- Take out items that have soaked up water and that cannot be cleaned and dried.
- Fix water leaks. Use fans and dehumidifiers and open doors and windows to remove moisture.
- Check and clean heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems before use.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles when cleaning with bleach. Open windows and doors to get fresh air. Never mix bleach and ammonia. The fumes from the mixture could injure or kill you.

**Who to contact
with questions**

If you have questions contact the following resources:

Issue	Agency	Contact
Mold	Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals www.dhh.louisiana.gov	888-293-7020
Cleanup Levels	Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/131/default.aspx	225-219-3640
Structural Integrity	Livingston Parish Permit Office	225-686-3021
Health Questions	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/	888-422-8737